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Washington State launches new map website

OLYMPIA, WA -- Have you ever wondered where Google and Bing get the information that appears on their online maps? Often, it comes straight from government map data, which is becoming increasingly easier to access online. Now, the State of Washington is hoping to make it easier for you to search and find the huge amount of geographic data it tracks, whether you're a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist or a just a curious member of the public.

The Washington State Department of Information Services this week launched the Washington State Geospatial Portal, found online at <http://geography.wa.gov>. The site is a way to access a wide variety of maps, interactive mapping applications, and geographic data hosted on government websites.

Whereas previously you would need to search through multiple state government agency websites to find map data, now you can find it all listed in one place online. Through the Geospatial Portal, you can:

- [Download data](#) to view in other map programs like Google Earth or Bing Maps.
- [Access online interactive mapping applications](#), with the ability to select and zoom areas, choose layers, and print. Interactive maps included on the site show information such as broadband speeds, sales tax rates, and comparisons of legislative districts.
- [View or download maps](#) showing a variety of information, including county population densities, tsunami and flood hazard areas, or soils and farming data.

Are you a local government with data to share?

The site's creators plan to include links to maps and data held by cities and counties in Washington State. Local governments can help expand the site by sending a link to their online maps and data files to the Washington State GIS Coordinator, Joy Paulus, at joy.paulus@dis.wa.gov.

The Department of Information Services is encouraging users to check back often on the site as more content is loaded over the coming months.

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